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For immediate release

### **First ARRA-funded Transuranic Waste shipment leaves Argonne for disposal facility in New Mexico**

ARGONNE, Ill. (Nov. 16, 2009) – The Department of Energy’s (DOE) Argonne National Laboratory has been removing transuranic (TRU) waste from its site for three years, but the Oct. 15 shipment of radioactive material to a disposal facility near Carlsbad, New Mexico marked the first time the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) picked up the tab.

The cleanup work is paid for by DOE’s Office of Environment Management. The influx of ARRA funds will allow the laboratory to ship out more than four times as much TRU waste (including both remote- and contact-handled) in the next 24 months as it has since the project was conceived three years ago.

The ARRA funding goes a long way to helping Argonne reach one of its most important goals: reducing its nuclear footprint.

Devin Hodge, project manager at the Facilities Management and Services Division at Argonne, helped oversee Thursday’s TRU waste removal. He said that projects like these help clean up the legacy of nuclear research at the laboratory.

“It makes it a safer place to work and will save money in the long run,” he said, adding that it’s costly to house hazardous materials because they require more monitoring and maintenance.

The TRU waste removal project is scheduled for completion by Sept. 30, 2011. The most recent shipment was sent out inside a massive barbell-shaped container housing three 30-gallon drums of radioactive debris. The waste comes from Argonne’s Alpha Gamma Hot Cell Facility, which was used to perform nuclear materials experiments and examinations for more than 40 years before it was closed in 2007.

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## Argonne TRU Shipment – add one

Dozens of people—from nuclear engineers to waste management mechanics—helped make the shipment possible. The container, carried out on a highly secured truck, was escorted to the Iowa state line by the Illinois State Police after it passed a 3-hour inspection by two specially trained State Troopers.

The waste material will ultimately be stored in the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant carved out of a Carlsbad-area salt mine nearly half a mile below the Earth's surface. WIPP began housing waste materials in 1999.

### **About Argonne**

The U.S. Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory seeks solutions to pressing national problems in science and technology. The nation's first national laboratory, Argonne conducts leading-edge basic and applied scientific research in virtually every scientific discipline. Argonne researchers work closely with researchers from hundreds of companies, universities, and federal, state and municipal agencies to help them solve their specific problems, advance America's scientific leadership and prepare the nation for a better future. With employees from more than 60 nations, Argonne is managed by [UChicago Argonne, LLC](#) for the [U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Science](#).

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